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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 2 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the forthcoming fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions scheduled for 4 March 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Lomaia**
Permanent Representative

11-25164 (E) 070311

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Annex to the identical letters dated 2 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the forthcoming fifteenth round of the Geneva Discussions scheduled for 4 March 2011

The fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions on the security and stability in Georgia's occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and the safe and dignified return of the internally displaced persons and refugees will be held on 4 March 2011.

It is planned to hold the meetings of the two working groups, in which participants will take part in an individual capacity. Deliberations will be moderated by the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and will be attended by the participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Head of the provisional administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District, Mr. Dimitri Sanakoev, and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, Mr. Giorgi Baramia, will take part in the forthcoming round together with the representatives of the proxy regimes from Tskhinvali and Sokhumi.

Participants from Georgia will raise three central issues at the next round of the Geneva Discussions.

First, the Russian Federation has to undertake the non-use of force commitment towards Georgia. Following the initiative of the President Saakashvili not to use force against the occupation forces of Russia, as well as the proxy regimes in Sokhumi and Tskhinvali, there is a need for Russia to reciprocate with the similar obligation. Georgia's pledge, also reified in the letters of the President to the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, OSCE and NATO, as well as the Presidents of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the United States, constitutes the unilateral assumption of binding obligation under international law. The Georgian side would like, once again, to reiterate that Russia's rhetoric on the necessity to sign a non-use of force agreement between Tbilisi on the one hand and Sokhumi and Tskhinvali on the other has a sole aim of legitimizing the proxy regimes under international law and is a clumsy excuse to avoid its own responsibility of non-use of force. After Georgia's unilateral pledge, the time has come for the Russian Federation to assume the non-use of force obligation. With this step Russia will demonstrate that its intentions towards Georgia are peaceful and that no further military aggression is planned against its sovereign neighbour.

The second issue that will be raised by the participants from Tbilisi is the necessity of establishing international security arrangements in the occupied Georgian regions. Because of Russia's decision to get rid of the United Nations and

OSCE presences from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and artificial obstacles, as a result of which the European Union Monitoring Mission is unable to enter the occupied regions, security and human rights situation in these regions lacks transparency and accountability. Security arrangements, comprising international peacekeeping and police forces, will stabilize the situation in the occupied regions, contribute to the overall stability in the wider region and be conducive to the safe return of internally displaced persons to their homes. In this context, Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to underline that Tbilisi is carefully watching developments in New York. We are receiving alarming information that the Russian Federation is trying to suffocate the current United Nations team by blocking the financing mechanisms necessary for its functioning. The Georgian side is ready to engage in the dialogue with the Russian Federation and the United Nations in order to find ways to continue United Nations participation in the Geneva Discussions and the joint incident prevention and response mechanisms. It will be a great loss for the Geneva process and the confidence-building process in general if Russia succeeds, yet again, in diminishing the international involvement in the peace process.

The third issue that is on the table, but on which there is no progress because of Russia's unwillingness to engage, is the return of internally displaced persons and refugees in safety and dignity to their places of habitual residence. Russia has been blocking the return process through various artificial reasons. This time we hope that Moscow will unlock the process and that substantial discussions will take place on the modalities of return of internally displaced persons and refugees, without discrimination, to all parts of occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

At the fifteenth round of the Geneva Discussions, the Georgian authorities will once again request full cooperation from the Russian side regarding the series of explosions on the territory of Georgia from September to November 2010. All relevant materials have been submitted to the Russian side through the Swiss Embassy in Tbilisi as well as on the margins of the fourteenth round of the Geneva talks in December 2010. However, no response has been received from the Russian side thus far. It is alarming that Russia seems to be covering up the persons, who are currently located within the occupied Georgian regions and who seem to be involved in the organization of a series of terrorist acts.

Together with these issues, the Georgian side will draw the attention of the co-chairs to the unacceptably hostile statements voiced from Moscow over the last few weeks. Several Russian legislators have issued groundless and absurd but alarming accusations that Georgia is allegedly behind the tragic terrorist attack in Domodedovo. Such statements clearly demonstrate that current Russian regime is in the process of creating an image of Georgia as the enemy in order to justify its impotence and failures in domestic and international affairs.

Moreover, participants from Tbilisi will bring to the attention of the relevant working groups several appalling facts that have come to light since the recent Geneva round in December 2010. Among such facts are the blatant violations of the property rights in both occupied regions and the launch of the so-called population census by the Sokhumi proxy regime: the census is clearly aimed at legitimizing the results of the heinous crimes of ethnic cleansing undertaken during the last two decades by Moscow and its proxy forces. Property rights will be discussed as a

separate agenda item in the second working group, and participants from Tbilisi will categorically request the reversal of the discriminatory policy towards ethnic Georgians.

Another issue that will once again be raised by the Georgian side will be the necessity of releasing all detained persons currently held in illegal captivity in the occupied territories. While some progress has been reached in this regard recently, several people still remain in detention and their release is mandatory.

During the fifteenth round the Georgian side will once again voice its concerns over the facts of infringing cultural heritage in the occupied regions and will request that relevant international organizations become more actively involved in scrutinizing the protection of cultural heritage.

Tbilisi, 1 March 2011